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RL:0384

SR 94
REQUESTING DEVELOPMENT OF A FLOOD CONTROL AND
DRAINAGE PLAN FOR THIRD REPRESENTATIVE DISTRICT

Statement for
Senate Committee on
Intergovernmental Relations
Public Hearing - 5 March 1980

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SR 94 would request the County of Hawaii to prepare a master flood control and drainage plan for the third representative district. This statement on the resolution does not reflect an institutional position of the University of Hawaii.

The third representative district encompasses North Kohala, Hamakua, North Hilo and a portion of South Hilo. Although the problem of flooding has been more serious in this district than elsewhere on the island of Hawaii, it is not restricted to this district. We agree that careful and wise management of floods is a desirable goal and systematic planning is needed for this and other districts. Proper management, however, is best carried out on a county-wide basis. Without such scope, little in the way of coordinated loss-reduction efforts could be achieved. Furthermore, county-wide efforts could still recognize the specific needs of and circumstances in smaller geographical areas. To the extent that flooding is viewed as a more localized planning concern, the legislative districts provide a poor basis for areal delineation. First, such districts do not necessarily coincide with other planning district delineations. Second, the legislative districts are not always formed around distinct physical features of the landscape that relate to flood problems, e.g., a watershed.

Sound flood plain management includes more than flood control and drainage planning. As spelled out in Federal House Document 465, a unified national program for managing flood losses and guidelines of the U.S. Water Resource Council, flood management involves a combination of land use regulations, insurance, and flood proofing as well as flood control by more traditional means as reservoirs, channelization, levees and related means. Federal funds are often available for flood control projects, but it is federal policy that attention be given to a complete and broad range of management alternatives. The federal government has also encouraged communities to participate in the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP). The resolution could go further by encouraging all communities in the state actively participate in this program.

In summary, we strongly recommend that any planning for flood control and drainage be conducted as part of a broader flood management effort. This effort should be undertaken at a broader scale than the "representative district."